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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 09/11/07

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- (1) Ambassador Schieffer lays flowers at monument for 9-11 victims

ASAHI (On line) (Full)
September 11, 2007

Photo shows US Ambassador Schieffer laying a bouquet of flowers at the "9-11 monument" in front of the Mizuho Financial Group Headquarters

This morning, on the sixth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the United States, US Ambassador to Japan Schieffer visited the

headquarters of the Mizuho Financial Group in Tokyo's Chiyoda Ward to attend a memorial ceremony for the victims. A branch of the former Fuji Bank, the predecessor to the Mizuyo Group, was located in the World Trade Center in New York. Among the victims in the terrorist attack on that building on Sept. 11, 2001, were 23 Japanese and US employees of that bank.

Ambassador Schieffer, after meeting with Mizuho President Terunobu Maeda, laid a bouquet of flowers at the memorial monument in front of the company headquarters on which the names of the victims are engraved.

(2) Abe's "stake my job" remark aimed to rivet US trust

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 11, 2007

"I will do my utmost, staking my job on extending Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean..." This remark, which came from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the day before the Diet opened its extraordinary session, caused wide repercussions in Japan's political center of Nagatacho. Why at this timing? What's in the prime minister's heart of hearts?

On the afternoon of Sept. 10, Abe was in a reception room for the president of the House of Councillors in the Diet. He was soon to take the upper chamber's platform in its plenary sitting for his keynote address. Seated on a chair, and with his elbows on the table, the prime minister was lost in thought for a while.

Two days earlier, Abe was in Sydney, Australia (with other APEC leaders). Standing beside Abe, US President Bush talked to Abe about the recently aired TV footage of Osama bin Laden, leader of the

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worldwide terrorist group Al Qaeda. "This represents how dangerous the world is," Bush rattled. Bush-burdened by his low popularity ratings--cannot back down from his "war on terror." In his meeting with Abe as well, Bush was concerned about it. He urged Abe to continue Japan's refueling mission somehow.

Meanwhile, Abe was feeling a subtle change in the United States' attitude over the issue of removing North Korea from its terrorist list. Japanese and US diplomatic officials had held a meeting to consult on this issue before the summit meeting. They agreed there that the United States would not sacrifice its bilateral relationship with Japan to normalize its diplomatic relations with North Korea. Bush and Abe were to have confirmed this. In their meeting, however, this issue was not taken up.

North Korea's abduction of Japanese nationals tops the policy agenda for Abe and his cabinet to tackle. His predecessor, Junichiro Koizumi, established a relationship of mutual trust with Bush, and Abe has no choice but to count on Bush. Abe was asked directly by Bush to extend Japan's refueling mission. In a sense, it was just what Abe might have needed. He had no other choice but to make up his mind.

"I've been saying abduction is an act of terrorism, so I can't refuse to cooperate in the war on terror. If Japan has to stop the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission, that means allowing terrorism. If Japan fails to extend the mission, then I will have to make a serious decision." With this, Abe had confessed his serious mind to his aide before he met the press on Sept. 9.

One views Abe's remark this time as a message aimed at calling public attention to the importance of refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. In a public opinion survey conducted by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun in late August as well, more than half of respondents were opposed to the MSDF's refueling activities.

Abe's remark this time hinted at his readiness to step down should he fail to get Diet approval to extend Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. Then, what did Abe really mean? There are also some people surmising that Abe might have had his grandfather, namely, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, in his heart of

hearts. In June 1960, Kishi clarified his intention to step down in exchange for a new Japan-US security pact coming into effect. They say Abe also thought to step down after drawing cooperation (from the opposition bench in the Diet) on Japan's antiterror assistance as a symbol of the bilateral alliance between Japan and the United States. "I've heard that," noted one of Abe's pre-shuffle cabinet members.

(3) Ozawa to lock horns with Abe in extra Diet session, aiming to force the prime minister to dissolve the Lower House for a snap election; Focus to be on DPJ's censure motion against prime minister

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 11, 2007

The extraordinary Diet session convened yesterday in a tense atmosphere right from the beginning because of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's statement that he and his cabinet might resign en masse if the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean could not be continued. Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or

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Minshuto) President Ichiro Ozawa, who sees the ongoing session as crucial for his party's strategy to grab the nation's political helm, has remained adamantly opposed to any continuation of the MSDF's mission (in the Indian Ocean). He is waiting for the right timing to force Abe to quit the prime minister's post and dissolve the Lower House to call for a snap election.

Ozawa yesterday morning assembled a dozen or so senior party members, including Deputy President Naoto Kan and Upper House Caucus Chairman Azuma Koshiishi, in the party's executive office on the third floor of the Diet building. He told them:

"We will only approve legislation that matches our principles and philosophy. But if it differs from that, any talk of revising the bill is out of the question. It would be dangerous for us to be folded into the ruling coalition's consultative framework. I would like the Policy Research Committee and the Diet Affairs Committee to keep that in mind."

The government and ruling coalition is considering new legislation to extend the MSDF's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean. The new legislation will not include Ozawa's principle that overseas deployment of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel must be limited to activities based on UN resolutions. Therefore, Ozawa finds no room for compromise.

In a party study-group session on Sept. 3 in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, Ozawa gave a lecture on the concentric structure of the basic unified principle of Japan-US security relations. In it, he developed his pet argument that the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitution of Japan, and the US-Japan Security Treaty should not be treated separately. The bilateral security arrangements and the Constitution are both based on the UN Charter.

The government and ruling camp will present new legislation, aiming at enacting it at the Lower House, where the ruling coalition has two-thirds of the seats. Chances seem slim that the prime minister will step down, giving up the MSDF's mission, even if the MSDF operation is temporarily withdrawn from the Indian Ocean. Contrary to Ozawa's enthusiasm, some observers predict that it would be difficult to put Abe in that tight a spot regarding the extension of the MSDF's refueling operations.

Therefore, the focus is now on when Ozawa submits to the Upper House a censure motion against the prime minister. The motion is not legally binding, but if it is adopted, the opposition will get an excuse for boycotting the plenary session, at which the prime minister will be present, as well as deliberations at the committees. A veteran lawmaker pointed out: "The opposition will probably submit another motion soon after the Lower House re-approved the new legislation (by a two-thirds majority vote)."

The DPJ, now the largest party in the Upper House, intends to urge

the government to disclose information on a series of politics-money scandals, as well as on the pension record-keeping fiasco, invoking the right of investigation of state affairs. Depending on the government's response, the opposition will likely stall the government, preventing deliberations.

Ozawa recently ordered his aides to attend all committee meetings in which he won't be able to take part and report to him in detail. He also instructed each of the prefectures to get prospects until the

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end of September for about 100 single-seat constituencies, in which they have yet to file candidates.

(4) Prime Minister Abe stakes his job on new antiterrorism legislation; Cabinet resignation en masse a real possibility

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Abridged)
September 11, 2007

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's announcement of his readiness to resign if he failed to extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean has effectively linked the question of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law -- the hot-button issue in the just-opened extraordinary Diet session -- to the fate of the Abe administration. In the wake of Abe's announcement, the government and ruling bloc intend to try to get out of the hole with new legislation regardless of the Antiterrorism Law's November 1 deadline. Nevertheless, the Abe administration is certain to face a possibly fatal situation irrespective of the fate of the new legislation. Abe's announcement to stake his job on an extension of the refueling mission has created a tough challenge for the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan, which has now become the largest party in the House of Councillors.

Abe's comment on his resignation has pushed the government and ruling camp toward the option of presenting new legislation instead of extending the current Antiterrorism Law, which requires Diet approval before November 1. Extending the current law runs the risk of the fate of the Abe administration effectively being determined by DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa, who is adamantly opposed to extending the refueling mission.

Although the presentation of new legislation would require Diet deliberations possibly beyond November 1, it would also allow the government to explain that the refueling mission is temporarily halted and that Diet deliberations are still underway. Such developments would not result in Abe's resignation and the deadline would also be effectively extended until the Diet adjourns. This would also enable the ruling camp, which holds a majority in the Lower House which takes precedence over the Upper House, to extend the Diet session until the end of the year.

The envisaged new legislation is likely to do away with a clause requiring the Diet's retroactive approval of SDF dispatch. Given the DPJ's strong opposition to an extension of the refueling mission, the government and ruling camp think that they would have to aim at overturning the Upper House's rejection of the new legislation with a two-thirds majority in the Lower House in accordance with Article 59 of the Constitution.

Re-approval by the Lower House is based on a rejection by the Upper House. But there is no guarantee that the DPJ, which holds the Upper House Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairmanship, to reject the new legislation early.

Failure by the Upper House to take final action within 60 days after receipt of the legislation passed by the Lower House may be determined by the Lower House to constitute a rejection of the bill by the Upper House, thereby allowing the Lower House to re-approve the legislation. This scenario would force the Diet to remain in session until November 10. In view of Prime Minister Abe's weakening grip on the LDP, there is skepticism in the ruling bloc about his

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ability to resort to such a step.

The government and ruling bloc's scenario of overturning the Upper House's decision is already drawing fire from the DPJ, which regards its landslide victory in the July election as a manifestation of popular will. If the ruling bloc opts for re-approval by the Lower House, chances are that the DPJ will submit to the Upper House a censure motion against the prime minister which will eventually pass the chamber with a majority approval by the opposition parties.

Such a consequence might prompt the government and ruling camp to openly try to seek Diet approval for the legislation in exchange for resignation of the Abe cabinet in order to avoid Lower House dissolution under the embattled prime minister. Asked on September 8 for his action in the event a censure motion was adopted by the Upper House, Abe denied Lower House dissolution for a snap general election.

Abe's comment to stake his job on the refueling mission has provoked the DPJ to harden its stance. The DPJ, which cannot afford to make compromises following its overwhelming victory in the July Upper House election, plans to block the legislation by exhaustive deliberations on it in the Upper House. The DPJ specifically intends to demand detailed explanations on the refueling mission by exercising its newly-found investigative powers in national politics. A senior DPJ lawmaker responsible for foreign and defense affairs commented: "There is a possibility that the MSDF has fueled US naval vessels headed for Iraq. If that is true, the new legislation would be blown up."

DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chair Kenji Yamaoka urged party members to remain on alert, saying: "If the SDF is to be pulled out while the new legislation is still being discussed, the government would wrongly blame the DPJ for its inability to hold the reins of government." President Ozawa, too, ordered party executives to brace for a showdown with the government and ruling bloc by telling them not to buy the story to slightly amend a bill designed to pursue different ideals.

Although the DPJ may not be able to block every possible means the government and ruling bloc would employ, Abe's resignation seems inevitable if the bill was scrapped or carried over to the next Diet session. The focus would then shift to select Abe's successor as LDP president.

(5) Japan, US conduct joint drills for 353 days in FY2006

AKAHATA (Page 4) (Full)
September 8, 2007

The Self-Defense Forces carried out 54 joint training exercises with US forces for a total of 353 days in fiscal 2006, sources revealed yesterday. In fiscal 2005, the SDF and US forces conducted 106 joint training exercises for a total of 416 days, showing a sharp increase over the preceding fiscal year. As compared to that fiscal year, there was a decrease in the number of bilateral joint training exercises between the SDF and US forces in fiscal 2006. However, those joint drills were intended to step up the SDF's capability of fighting in warfare like the Iraq war.

In October last year, the Ground Self-Defense Force's 1st Airborne Brigade, based in Chiba Prefecture, conducted joint training

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exercises in the GSDF's Sekiyama range in Niigata Prefecture with US troops from the 2nd Battalion of the 162nd Infantry Regiment of the 41st Infantry Brigade of the Oregon Army National Guard. Those US troops experienced the Iraq war.

The US battalion also participated in a mop-up operation in the central Iraqi city of Fallujah that was internationally decried for its indiscriminate massacre involving civilians.

According to the winter 2006 issue of the Oregon Sentinel, a newspaper published for the Oregon Army, the battalion conducted

joint training with the GSDF for traffic control, close-range fighting, scouting, and sniping. The paper says the joint training got a grip on reality with some of the troops playing the roles of citizens on the battlefield and others as "antigovernment elements."

The paper explains the meaning of such joint training as follows: "Enemies are not always in military uniforms, as the Oregon troops encountered them when they were deployed in Iraq. One day, you may shake hands with someone there. The next day, that same person may set improvised explosive devices (IED) along the main supply routes."

Iraq has been placed under unreasonable military control, so its population has now turned into an enemy. As it stands, US military operations in Iraq have bogged down. We can surmise that GSDF troops learned actual tactics in the training on how to carry out a military breakthrough facing such an impasse.

In January and February this year, the GSDF's 1st Combined Brigade, based in Okinawa Prefecture, and US troops from the US Marine Corps' 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa conducted urban combat training at the GSDF's Oyanohara range in Kumamoto Prefecture. The US military is attaching importance to urban combat training in carrying out the Iraq war.

The USMC, in its Feb. 9 website news reporting on the urban combat drill, quoted a GSDF officer as saying: "Our tactics are based on books. The Marine Corps has very advanced combat experiences in the real world that we want to learn."

The Air Self-Defense Force has been also conducting joint training with its US counterpart to step up its overseas combat capability.

The ASDF has been carrying out live-fire and bombing exercises near Guam for its fighter jets since 2005.

The ASDF's training there in 2005 was for its fighter jets only. In 2006, however, ASDF fighters conducted dogfight training, with US Air Force F-15 fighters playing the roles of enemies. The training was for the ASDF's F-4EJ Kai fighters to carry out airstrikes while other ASDF fighters were in dogfights with the USAF's F-15 fighters, according to the June 15, 2006 issue of the Asagumo, an associate newspaper for the SDF.

In June 2007, the ASDF's F-2 fighters participated in airstrike training for the first time. The F-2 is a state-of-the-art fighter jet model with its antiship and antiground capabilities enhanced.

The ASDF has plans to introduce air tankers, which are capable of refueling F-15 and F-2 fighters in flight and which can extend their

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cruising range dramatically. The ASDF has already carried out joint training with the USAF. In fiscal 2006 as well, ASDF F-15 fighters were refueled in flight by USAF tanker aircraft on their flight training missions to Alaska. The ASDF and the USAF started such joint training in 2003. This further beefs up the ASDF's overseas airstrike capability.

In addition, the ASDF, based on an intergovernmental agreement between Japan and the United States to realign US forces in Japan, conducted joint training in March at its Tsuiki base in Fukuoka Prefecture with US F-15 fighters deployed to the USAF's Kadena base in Okinawa Prefecture. Such joint training is intended to integrate Japan and the United States in the military area on the pretext of mitigating Okinawa's burden of hosting US military bases.

SCHIEFFER